

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-22 (Cancelled)

23. (Currently Amended) A process ~~as claimed in claim 10~~ of treating a metallic bone implant, consisting essentially of treating the metallic bone implant with an aqueous solution containing fluoride ions in a concentration of greater than 0% and up to 3%, said aqueous solution being free from sodium and sodium ions,

said aqueous solution being free from sodium and sodium ions, and being a solution of a fluoride selected from the group consisting of lithium fluoride, cesium fluoride, potassium fluoride, ammonium fluoride, stannous fluoride, or any combination thereof,

in which the surface of the metallic bone implant after the treatment with the aqueous solution containing fluoride ions has essentially the same morphology as the surface of the implant before said treatment.

Claims 24-26 (Cancelled)

27. (Currently Amended) A process ~~as claimed in claim 10~~ of treating a metallic bone implant, wherein said metallic bone implant has having a surface layer constituted by a metallic oxide, consisting essentially of treating the metallic bone implant with an aqueous solution containing fluoride ions in a concentration of greater than 0% and up to 3%,

said aqueous solution being free from sodium and sodium ions, and being a solution of a fluoride selected from the group consisting of lithium fluoride, cesium fluoride, potassium fluoride, ammonium fluoride, stannous fluoride, or any combination thereof.

Claims 28-33 (Cancelled)

34. (Currently Amended) A process as claimed in claim ~~10~~ 27, wherein said metallic bone implant is constituted by titanium or a titanium alloy, and said metallic oxide is a titanium oxide.

Claims 35-43 (Cancelled)

44. (Currently Amended) A process ~~as claimed in claim 10~~ of treating a metallic bone implant, consisting essentially of treating the metallic bone implant with an aqueous solution containing fluoride ions in a concentration of greater than 0% and up to 3%, said aqueous solution being free from sodium and sodium ions,

said aqueous solution being free from sodium and sodium ions, and being a solution of a fluoride selected from the group consisting of lithium fluoride, cesium fluoride, potassium fluoride, ammonium fluoride, stannous fluoride, or any combination thereof; and

comprising a further step, performed after said treatment with the aqueous solution containing fluoride ions, wherein the implant is treated with a solution comprising calcium ions.

Claims 45-81 (Cancelled)

82. (New) A process of treating a metallic bone implant, consisting essentially of treating the metallic bone implant with an aqueous solution containing fluoride ions in a concentration of greater than 0% and up to 3%, said aqueous solution being free from sodium and sodium ions,

said aqueous solution being free from sodium and sodium ions, and being a solution of a fluoride from hydrofluoric acid,

in which the surface of the metallic bone implant after the treatment with the aqueous solution containing fluoride ions has essentially the same morphology as the surface of the implant before said treatment.